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Introduction

The discussion about the integration of migrants in Russia began relatively late, and it was only a few years ago that the first steps in creating concrete policies were implemented. In public discussions, as well as in policy documents, the emphasis is usually on the cultural integration of migrants, while their economic, social and political engagement is omitted. In conclusion, social problems, including the fact that many migrants are compelled to function in the domain of the grey economy, are explained in terms of their cultural illiteracy rather than structural reasons (Shnirel'man 2008). All the more often, the construction of cultural otherness is made in the framework of religiosity, Islam in particular. This tendency is not unique to Russia; a similar religionization of migrants and the migration issue had already taken place earlier in Western Europe.

This chapter analyses Russian debates on the role of religion in the integration of Muslim migrants in Russia within the political elite, the media and Muslim organizations. In addition to cultural discourse, another feature of the presentations of Islamic identity of migrants as a potential social problem is linked to the securitization of the migration issue. The threat of radical Islam, spreading among the migrants and spread by them, is exaggerated in the media. Because of this fear, the promotion of 'traditional Islam' by official Islamic organizations is preferred over informal networks of Muslims. However, due to the scarcity of resources, as well as occasional inadequate abilities, the official Islamic organizations are not always able to meet these demands. Suspicions concerning grass-roots, unofficial networks of Muslims correspond to the common tendency in the discussions on integration to see migrants as objects, not as active agents.

Islamic Religiosity and Migrants in post-Soviet Russia

Because of the scale of illegal migration, it is difficult to estimate the number of Muslims as a proportion of the migrants in Russia, but according to the statistics of the Federal Migration Service (FMS, *Federal'naya Migratsionnaya Sluzhba*), in 2011, a little over 40% of migrants were Muslims (Starostin 2012). However, not all of them consider themselves as religious or are religiously

observant (Zaionchkovskaya, Mkrtchyan and Tyuryukanova 2009: 33; Vendina 2009: 131). In addition to personal differences, national cultures vary and, for example, Tajiks are usually more religious than migrants from Kyrgyzstan. The social context of their home countries and their migration history influences the religious activity of communities. For example, Tajiks were the first large migrant group to emigrate from Central Asia and due to their longer-standing presence in Russia, as well as the commonness of their religious education, Tajiks have attained a stronger position in Russian mosques as imams than other migrant minorities (Makarov and Starostin 2014). Although there is no reliable statistical data from Russia, some American studies demonstrate that religiosity is often a more enduring component in migrant minorities than, for example, language or culture. In addition, the ability of churches or mosques to maintain the feeling of connectedness to one's roots is another reason why many migrants become more religious in their new home countries than they were at home (Senses Ozyurt 2013: 1620–1). A small qualitative survey conducted by Guzel Yusupova (2013) among Muslim migrants in St. Petersburg and Moscow suggests that the increase of religiosity is more common among people with less education and in a more disadvantaged position. Yusupova notices that for them, both the emotional and practical support of the religious community is especially vital.

The Muslim minorities in such big cities as Moscow and St. Petersburg are extremely heterogeneous in terms of religious tradition, ethnicity and socio-economic position, and therefore it is not surprising that the community is divided into various groupings. For example, in St. Petersburg there are ethnically coloured prayer rooms for different ethnicities, such as Ingushetians, Dagestanians, Azerbaijanis and Tajiks. At the same time, a small prayer room at the very centre of the city in Apraksin Dvor gathers people of many ethnicities. In my private discussions with Russian scholars of migration and Muslims, two contradicting views occur. On the one hand, migrants are noticed to form small informal communities and organize prayer rooms on the basis of ethnicity. On the other hand, other scholars point out that in the uncertain environment of Russian megapolises, such ethnic groups as Kyrgyzs and Uzbeks, who traditionally have conflicting relationships, may find common ground in their religious identity. According to Aleksei Malashenko, while earlier migrants to Russia identify themselves as Tajiks or Uzbeks, religious identification has become more common recently. Religious identity is seen as a unifying element in the face of Russian nationalism and, in this sense, even a 'means for survival' ('Aleksei Malashenko: Islam...' 2013).

Particularly in a country like Russia with a poor state-sponsored system of support for migrants, the mosque is a natural place for many Muslims to seek company and support in an alien environment.

Therefore, it is not surprising that Russian mosques and Muslim organizations have been almost compelled to begin to consider undertaking social work with migrants. Initially – and to a large part even today – this work was done on a voluntary basis with very little resources. Despite the statements by the political elite on the role of the Muslim community in integrating migrants, the state still provides relatively little resources for this work. The growing number of migrants within mosque-goers decreases the average income. Consequently, even maintaining the premises can be a great financial burden for the Muslim community, leaving few resources for social work. Organized support for migrants includes legal and social counselling as well as Russian language and Islam classes and children's clubs, to name just a few. Here as well, the quantity of potential clients proposes challenges. A representative of an Islamic cultural centre in St. Petersburg explained that due to the number of migrants, they cannot advertise their Russian language courses, and that these courses are primarily intended to train people who then can teach the skills they have acquired in their own communities. Some migrant communities may also prioritize need in their areas of origin. For example, a Dagestanian Islamic centre in St. Petersburg has been involved in such charity projects as gathering exercise books for children in Dagestan, despite the fact that many of the people attending this centre have meagre incomes.

Given that support for migrants is predominately carried out as local initiatives, there is great variance both in the volume of such work and in its methods. While some mosques are very active, in others the work can be rather insignificant. For example, in my interviews with some Russian imams in Moscow and St. Petersburg, the only example of charity and social work they mentioned was the open food service during the festival of Kurban Bayram. A recent survey in Samara reveals that while a substantial proportion of local Muslim migrants go to mosque more or less regularly, they consider the Muslim organizations' social work with migrants to be ineffectual (Uryupin 2013).

However, although not all Muslim organizations have the resources or competencies to offer efficient and relevant support for migrants, mosques as a meeting point can provide networks and information for them as well as emotional comfort. European and North American studies, building on Putnam's (2000) theory of engagement in various associations as a source of social capital, have shown that for migrants, mosques are often places where civic skills are disseminated and learned (Senses Ozyurt 2013). Russian scholars disagree on whether Islamic religiosity helps or hinders the integration of migrants into contemporary Russian society. While some point out the benefits of the religious community for newcomers in, for example, establishing networks, finding moral support and learning about the surrounding society, others claim that religiosity isolates migrants from the

rest of society (Dmitrev, Ledenva and Nazarova 2013). The critical views are usually based on the fear that Islamic networks turn into cultural ghettos instead of helping the integration of migrants into the society. Nevertheless, the criticism can also be suggested to reflect a distrust of non-official and thus uncontrollable actors. A frequent concern among scholars and commentators on migration issues is the propaganda of radical Islam among disadvantaged migrants (Dmitrev, Ledenva, and Nazarova 2013: 76).

'Integration' of Migrants as a Policy Objective

The discussion about the need to have an efficient integration policy for migrants emerged in Russia later than, for example, in Western Europe. Although Russian scholarly literature has addressed such issues as interethnic relationships or the adaptation of migrants, the study of integration policies mostly originates from the beginning of the 2000s. As early as the beginning of the 1990s, the Federal Migration Programmes were mentioning the 'adaptation and integration of migrants', but very few practical measures were implemented to attain this goal (Mukomel 2013: 5). A turning point was President Putin's speech in 2012, in which he noted that the integration of migrants had been largely ignored in the migration policy. The same argument could be found in the Concept of National Migration Policy for the Russian Federation until 2025, published later that year (Kontseptsiya 2012; Iontsev, and Ivakhnyuk 2013: 6). Although the FMS has introduced some initiatives, such as migrant integration centres (Krainova 2012), it seems that the policies are not very widespread or effective.

The understanding of the term 'integration' varies greatly, not only between different countries, but also between societal actors (e.g. Kortmann 2015:58–60), and its definition is always a political act. In recent years, the expression the 'integration and adaptation' (*integratsiya and adaptsiya*) of migrants has established itself in Russian political and policy jargon, as, for example, in the FMS's project to introduce a law on the 'integration and adaptation of migrants', which has not materialized (on the project, see Besnyak 2014).

The dual formulation can be suggested to be designed to avoid the accusations which the term 'adaptation' may invite as a one-sided demand to migrants to abandon their own culture. However, in the Russian discussion, the word adaptation (*adaptsiya*) is understood in other ways as well. An eminent scholar of ethnic relations in the Soviet Union and Russian Federation, Leokadiya Drobizheva (2010), defines adaptation as a two-way process between the host society and migrants, who preserve their cultural identity while also adapting to the host society.

In such European countries as Germany and the Netherlands, Muslim and migrant organizations criticize the word ‘adaptation’ as indicating a demand to assimilate into the majority. In the definition of the concept of integration by these leaders, such words as recognition and accept repeat and are considered to be more crucial aspects of successful integration than, for example, even learning the language of the host society (Koortmann 2015). Russian Muslim organizations have conducted relatively little discussion about the terminology concerning integration policies. Typically, instead of challenging and opening up the terms for analysis, the Muslim leaders have adopted the terms as such, and in this way, participated in the negotiations on their understanding.

In October 2013, in the 225-year celebrations of the founding of the first muftiate in Ufa, President Putin gave a speech which evoked much discussion among Muslim leaders. The most quoted parts of this speech were Putin’s call to ‘socialization’ (*sotsializatsiya*) of the Russian umma as a ‘development of the traditional Muslim way of life, thinking and viewpoints in concordance with contemporary social reality’ and the notion of the significance of the Muslim organizations’ contribution to the ‘social adaptation’ of migrants (‘Nachalo vstrechi...’ 2013). In the leading Muslim organizations, the speech was interpreted as praise for their work and a promise of deepening cooperation and support for their work with migrants, even though some Muslim activists, mainly from outside the biggest muftiates, expressed their scepticism towards the state’s willingness to distribute any significant resources to Muslims for this work (Guseinova and Abdullaeva 2013). However, the Fund to Support Islamic Culture, Education and Science even announced the publication of the text, referred to as the ‘Ufa these’, in Russian, English, Arabic, Turkish and Persian (‘Ufmskie tezisi’ 2014). In the following years, the term ‘socialization’ appeared in the title of several high-profile Islamic events, such as the IX Islamic Forum, which in 2013 was organized under the title ‘Socialisation of umma in the strategic development of civil society’ and the conference ‘Russian Muslims: Socialization, Enlightenment and Tradition’, held in Kazan in January 2015. Surprisingly, hardly any attention was paid to the indication of the word ‘socialization’ as implying that Russian Muslims are in some way separate from Russian society and needing to be included in it. Perhaps informed by political tact and tactics, Muslim leaders chose to understand the word either in the meaning of ‘contributing to society’ or of being generalized to include all Russians. In his speech in the Federal Public Chamber, the First Deputy Chairman of the Union of Muftis of Russia, Damir Mukhetdinov, stated: ‘The theme of the social integration of Russian citizens in general, and the Muslim community in particular, becomes more important every day’ (‘Sotsializatsiya rossiiskogo islama...’ 2013).

Even in scholarly literature on the integration of migrants, especially in the debates on the ‘success’ or ‘failure’ of certain cases, it may be occasionally forgotten how fluid and situational the concept of integration is. Moreover, integration composes of several, not necessarily correlating aspects. For example, in her study of the integration of first- and second-generation Muslim women into American society, Saba Senses Ozyurt (2013) notices that participation in institutionalized Islamic activity simultaneously strengthens civic and political engagement and lessens acculturation. Thereby, integration can also be selective.

In Western Europe, an integral or even key aspect of the successful integration of migrants is their participation in the labour market (Kortmann 2015: 1060). In Russia, this issue is hardly ever addressed: because of the illegal status of a substantial proportion of migrants as well as the weakness of social security, migrants are automatically assumed to be engaged in wage labour. The Concept of National Migration Policy until 2025 (Kontsepsiya 2012) does mention the social, economic and civic integration of migrants, as well as the importance of improving their legal status and decreasing xenophobia as central factors in successful integration. However, such topics as engagement in civic or political activism or trust in local authorities and democracy are seldom discussed as indicators of successful integration in the media, political debates or even some academic publications. In contrast, adaptation to culture figures at the centre of discussions about the integration of migrants (Achkasov and Rozanova 2013:24–5).

The texts of various programmes and the speeches of the leading politicians divulge that they tend to understand the integration of migrants predominantly as an aspect of cultural education and not, for example, as a challenge of social work, which would make migrants feel like respected members of the society. Language or cultural education is presented as a remedy for such social problems as criminality. For example, the joint programme of the FMS and the Russian Orthodox Church (ROC), ‘Enlightenment: Linguistic and Cultural Adaptation of Migrants’ was commented on by the Patriarch Kirill in the following way: ‘Another reason [for the project] is linked to criminality, including the formation of criminal gangs on an ethnic basis, because the lack of understanding of local culture, local language, local traditions and habits often provokes everyday conflicts’ (‘RPTs budet...’ 2013).

Even the Muslim leaders comply with this rhetoric when they aim to gain support for their work in the integration of migrants by stressing the Russian language and culture classes instead of, for example, talking about the legal aid organized by several Muslim organizations, occasionally connected to local mosques. Nevertheless, there are also Muslim voices that rebuke the ascent of these courses for revealing ignorance about the real challenges of migrants or even a certain

cynicism. Mukhammad Basyr Gasanov, the leader of the Islamic charity foundation Amana, points out that a crucial factor in an effective integration policy would be to liberate migrants from 'slave work contracts', which often do not even allow them one free day a week to be able to take these courses (Guseinova and Abdullaeva 2013). Political scholar, Abdulla Mukhametov (2015), points out that instead of cultural differences between migrants and Russians, the reason for many social problems rather lie in discrimination against migrants, which leads to their alienation from society.

The expression 'integration and adaptation of migrants' is frequently continued with references to Russian society and values. However, speech about 'national values' in the integration of migrants has been problematized by several scholars as an artificial construction and hierarchic evaluation. Particularly in modern societies, people subscribe to numerous competing values and worldviews, therefore the ideal of adapting migrants into one defined value-frame seems unrealistic at best and authoritarian at worst. Often the named 'national' values, such as 'justice', 'democracy', 'tolerance' and 'freedom', represent an idealized vision of a given nation. Mentioning them as something to which the migrants should adapt suggests that these ideals do not belong to the values of the migrants and their home countries (Moosavi 2014: 659). The idealized vision of 'national values' also aids in shifting the blame for social problems onto the culture of the migrants from the social structure of the receiving country. For example, when Russian commentators propose that education on Russian culture can prevent criminal activity, they implicitly suggest that corruption, for instance, does not belong to the structures of Russian society, but is rooted in the migrants' 'culture'.

A revealing example of the definition of 'our values', as well as of the outcomes of the scarcity of the discussion about migration is a scandal around a brochure, *A Labour Migrant's Handbook*, published by an NGO from St. Petersburg, Look Into the Future, with 'informational support' from the administration of the St. Petersburg and Leningrad oblast' of the FSM in 2011 (Spravochnik ... 2011). The brochure, which was printed in Russian, Uzbek, Kyrgyz and Tajik, depicted Central Asian migrants as construction tools, such as a paintbrush and a putty knife, in contrast to Russian figures, such as a doctor, an officer and a museum guide, portrayed as attractive human beings. It was precisely this contrast which led the government of Tajikistan, as well as numerous NGOs, representing both these ethnicities and human rights organizations, to condemn the brochure and led to its withdraw as well as to the authorities denying any connection to the project ('Brochure Depicts Migrants as Tools' 2012). However, an analysis of the brochure also reveals other hierarchical evaluations about migrants and the native inhabitants of St. Petersburg. Of 45 pages, 16 were devoted to information about HIV, implying that this to be the main health problem among

migrants and creating a link between migrants and the HIV epidemic. The ‘useful advice’ of the brochure reveals further underlying assumptions about migrants. The text explains that in St. Petersburg ‘it is customary’ to ‘take care of one’s personal hygiene’ and to wear ‘clean clothes’. The advice on what ‘one should not do’, include ‘wearing always and everywhere national costume, because that attracts much attention, which is not always necessary’ or to ‘always wearing a track-suit, especially with classic shoes (track-suits are used for practicing sport)’ (Spravochnik ... 2011). In addition to suggesting that the distinctive appearance of migrants, such as national costumes, is problematical, the advice draws a picture of potentially unclean, poorly dressed migrants, in contrast to the clean, well-dressed and well-behaving native citizens of Russia.

Religionization of Migrants

Several European scholars have talked about the religionization of the ‘migrant issue’ during recent decades in Europe. Whereas in the 1980s, racist discourse about migrants referred to such groups as Pakistanis, Somalis or Turks, in the 2000s these are addressed more often as ‘Muslims’.

Religionizing discourses tend to present Muslims as a unified group and to explain the actions and specifics of Muslims as deriving from their religious identity. This development can be traced to the rise of cultural racism, developed by the French *Nouvelle Droite* in the 1960s as a response to the popularity of the leftist ideology. Instead of openly racist claims about the inferiority of certain ‘races’ or ethnicities, cultural racism is able to disguise its offensive and discriminating claims under the auspice of ‘cultural criticism’. The intertwined processes of the religionization of Muslim migrants and the rise of Islamophobia draw a Huntingtonian ‘clash of civilizations’, which allows Islamic and Christian worldviews to be described as irreconcilable entities and presenting this as the cause of the alleged incapability and unwillingness of Muslim migrants to integrate into Christian societies (Kaya 2012: 401; Marranci 2011: 821–2).

In Russian public discussions about ‘migrants’, internal migrants from Caucasus are often included in this category whereas in debates on ‘problems with migrants’, such nationalities as Belarusians or Ukrainians seldom figure, despite the substantial size of these groups. The fuzziness and the extension of the category of ‘migrant’ in the discussion on the problems of migration, including criminality and the shadow economy, divulges the ‘religionization’ and racist underpinnings of many debates about the ‘migration issue’.

Traditional Religiosity seen as Promoting the Integration of Migrants

In Western academic and social discussions about the integration of Muslim migrants, their (assumed) conservative attitudes towards, for example, sexual minorities or sexual liberation have often been understood as a problem (Joppke 2014: 1321). In Russia, conservatism and subscription

to 'traditional values' is rather seen as the main contribution that Islamic religiosity can give to the integration of migrants. The root of the problems concerning the integration of migrants is explained in their alienation from the tradition of their forefathers. For example, in her book on young migrants in Russia, Voropaeva (2011: 63) writes, 'as a result of the unique "democratisation" in Russia, traditional values and norms (such as active work, brotherhood, collectivism, morality) were lost. Which lead to an imbalance between the incorrectly understood freedom and the responsibility of an individual'. As a remedy, Voropaeva calls for strengthening the collectivism in societal units such as families, instead of individualism. Although the author says very little about the role of religious leaders in reviving 'traditional values', her diagnosis of the problem is very similar to that of the (conservative) religious leaders, who frequently blame individualism and excessive freedom of choice.

In comparing the political rhetoric and media, the benefits of 'traditional religious values' is more often omitted or questioned in the latter. In the media, religious observance is frequently presented as an alien and inappropriate mode of behaviour in the urban Russian space. Moreover, the 'traditional values' of Muslims are seen as a threat to secular society, even though words such as 'secular' would not necessarily be used. For example, in the media debates about the construction of new mosques, the 'traditional Islam' of such ethnicities as Tatars is presented as a private religious practice in distinction from the Islamic religiosity of migrants, who are accused of crowding the mosques as a means to 'demonstrate their presence' (Aitamurto 2016).

The idea of the 'traditional values' of Islam is in accordance with the rise of neo-conservatism during Putin's third presidency. However, this neo-conservative rhetoric begs the question on how deeply ordinary Russian people are willing to commit themselves to these 'traditional values'. For example, in Russian public debates, 'traditional religious values' are presented as defending the sanctity of the family. However, it is questionable whether contemporary Russians are willing to, for example, deny such things as divorce or abortion. Migrant families may have more conservative gender roles, for example, but it is arguable whether this is seen as a merit or as a social problem within the Russian audience.

In his article, 'National issue', Putin (2012) encourages cooperation between the state and 'the traditional religions of Russia,' not only in education, but also in social work. Indeed, in the 2010s, the Russian Orthodox Church infiltrated many areas of social policy, such as family counselling, rehabilitation of drug addicts and ex-prisoners, etc. Unlike the charity work of the minority religions, the ROC has received funding from the state to fulfil these tasks. The federal project of the 'social and cultural adaptation and integration of foreign citizens in the Russian Federation' also

mentions cooperation with ‘religious organisations’ (Proyekt zakona... 2014). By 2014, the FMS had made 42 local agreements with Muslim organizations and 80 with Orthodox Christian organizations on cooperation on migrant integration. On the federal level, the FMS signed a significant agreement with the ROC on organizing Russian language and tradition courses for migrants.¹

Two main lines can be noticed in the policies to accommodate Muslim (and other) religious minorities in non-Muslim areas. In the United States, freedom of religion is based on an ‘individual rights path’, whereas most European countries have adopted a ‘corporate recognition path’ (Joppke 2014: 1325–6). In this model, the state seeks to cooperate with religious institutions. The problem with this approach is that the state has to select its partners, and this choice is always subjective. Typically, European states have aimed to corporate with ‘moderate’ Muslim organizations and thereby weaken the radical forms of Islam. However such politics may lead to discrimination against some Muslim organizations even if they are not engaged in violent radicalism as such. Such a distinction is also made by Putin, who mentions that policies should aim to strengthen ‘official’ Islamic organizations in contrast to ‘non-formal’ (*neformal'nye*) leaders, who, according to him, often subscribe to ‘extremist’ ideas (Nachalo vstrechi... 2013).

The Russian state has adopted a rather strict line concerning Islamic organizations. Several organizations, such as Hizb-ut Tahrir or the followers of Said Nursi, are banned as extremist in Russia, unlike in Europe. On a local level, officials often refuse to give registration to Islamic organizations that do not belong to the local muftiate, and the prayer rooms of such organizations are routinely raided. In public discussions, any criticism of the officials by Muslims is easily condemned as radicalism or unpatriotic activity. Consequently, the leading muftiates have adopted a very compliant rhetoric concerning the state, even concerning such controversial issues as Russia’s support of Bashar al-Assad or the violations of the rights of Russian Muslims in closing prayer rooms, conducting raids on them or banning religious literature. The Islamic leaders regularly express their loyalty to the Russian state and present this loyalty as one of the core values of ‘traditional Russian Islam’ (Aitamurto 2015). However, this uncritical praise may occasionally seem hypocritical and self-serving in the eyes of ordinary believers and thus undermine the credibility of the muftiates.

¹ Information about the project can be found on its website ‘Prosveshchenie’, retrieved 10 November from <http://help-migrant.ru/>.

As mentioned before, Russian Muslims have very diverging ethnic and cultural traditions. The rapid increase in migration has not only changed the composition of the Muslim minority in many Russian areas, but has also caused internal conflict. In such large cities as Moscow and St. Petersburg, Tatars have traditionally formed the majority of local ummas, and are conceived as a well-integrated, well-educated and respected minority in these cities. Not surprisingly, the arrival of waves of migrants from a completely different cultural tradition of Central Asia and Caucasus, many of whom are working in non-prestige professions with illegal status have not always been welcomed by the older Muslim community. Moreover, the rise of Islamophobia as an aspect of xenophobia may have further fuelled the old Muslim minority to see the newcomers as a problem (Verkhovskii 2007: 127). A revealing example of such sentiments is the article 'Quality in quantity. Russian Muslims facing the challenges of demography and migration', published on the Islamic website, Ansar.ru (Mukhametov 2015a). The article quotes a scholar of Islam and the Chair of the Carnegie Moscow Centre's Religion, Society, and Security Programme, Aleksei Malashenko: 'If in the 1980s, among the majority of the people in our country, a Muslim was associated with a cunning, but all-in-all a close "Tatar-neighbour", in the 1990s, it [the association] is already an extremely hostile and hardly understandable "Caucasian fighter"'. The article continues: 'For some it may seem strange, but Russian Muslims are not always unanimous supporters of migration: because of it the number of their co-believers rises in quantity but not in quality'. The socio-economic gap between the well-integrated Muslim religious elite and the majority of new Muslim migrants certainly sets challenges to their communication. There is a danger that the official Muslim organizations will turn into similar representatives of their minority as the majority of the National Cultural Associations (NCA), which in Russian big cities claim to represent their ethnic community, but are alienated from the majority of the less-advantaged members of these groups. Indeed, the role of most NCAs is quite insignificant in helping new migrants from their own ethnic group (Dmitrev, Ledenva and Nazarova 2013: 80).

Even in the well-meant statements of the Russian Muslim leaders, migrants are often treated as objects; people who need education not only about Russian culture, but also about 'traditional Russian Islam'. For example, the Chairman of the Council of Muftis in Russia, Ravil' Gainutdin, emphasizes the need for moral education among migrants: 'It is of vital importance that Muslim migrants go through the process of adaptation in due course, got acquainted with the cultures and traditions of the nations of Russia, and first of all of the [ethnic] Russian people, that they learn the Russian language, get the spiritual-moral education without which it is impossible to adjust to a life in an unfamiliar country' (quoted in Starostin 2011). In another interview, Gainutdin ponders the

role of mosques in the integration of migrants: 'It is of vital importance to form among the labour migrants, both internally and externally, the right [sic!] models of behaviour, even more so because with people also ideas, occasionally destructive and dangerous, migrate' (Info Islam 2013).

However, the concept of 'traditional Islam' into which migrants should be adapted is also criticized by Muslim thinkers, who point out the artificial nature of the concept in the face of the multiplicity of traditions in Islam and the freedom of individual religious search (*ijtihad*) in the religious tradition of Islam (Mukhametov 2015b). There are also examples of integrating Muslim migrants into religious activity as equal partners. The muftiate of the Nizhny Novgorod was among the first to take an active stance in the integration of migrants. Instead of conceiving them as a potential source of social problems and radical Islam, the muftiate has employed migrants as imams, are able to reach local migrant communities (Starostin 2011).

Securitization of Muslim Migrants

In Russian discussions, nationalizing Islamic religiosity is seen as a guarantee that the migrants will hold their primary loyalty to the state over their religion. Implicitly, this discussion presents Islam as a potentially dangerous religion, and thereby lays an extra burden on Muslims to prove their loyalty to the state, unlike non-Muslim migrant groups, for example, Byelorussians or Moldavians in Russia. The policy objective of domesticating the religion of Muslim migrants can be found in other European countries as well, and it is intimately linked with the securitization of Islam and the discussion about migrants (e.g. Humphrey 2009). Securitizing discourses, which began to figure in discussions about migration in the 1980s, place migration in the framework of national security, whether in terms of terrorist violence, social welfare or the purity of culture or race, instead of, for example, social politics (Alexseev 2006: 6–7). Ayhan Kaya argues that this framing draws the attention away from social and structural problems, thereby functioning as a form of governmentality. Moreover, he claims that by presenting migrants as a source of possible threats and a consequent construction of 'us' versus the 'dangerous 'others'', the securitization of migrants is tantamount to their stigmatization (Kaya 2012: 403–4).

Vladimir Malakhov (2014: 1071–2), divides Russian public discussions concerning migration into four basic approaches: liberal pragmatism, humanitarian perspective, conservative-statist views and cultural fundamentalism. Whereas the last of these promotes ethnic and religious uniformity and the refusal of non-Slavic migrants, securitization is one of the core features of the conservative-statist stance, which is represented by such high-ranking officials as Konstantin Zatulin, the first deputy

chairman of the committee of the State Duma for the CIS and relations with Russian nationals abroad.

As in Putin's 'Theses of Ufa', the main challenge of the integration of Muslim migrants is indeed often presented to be the prevention of religious radicalization. This framing defines the problem to be the activity of religious zealots among migrants, and the remedy the propagation of 'moderate religiosity'. In this way, the frame of 'religious radicalization' draws attention away from such societal problems as ethnic discrimination or the societal structures which compel migrants into the domain of the grey economy as a cause of criminality. Some Muslim activists and scholars claim that the threat of radicalization and terrorist inclinations among Muslim migrants is exaggerated in public debates, and that occasionally this is done for political purposes (Malashenko 2007: 36; Drobizheva 2010).

Islamic Religiosity seen as an Obstacle to Integration

In today's globalized world, Islamophobic arguments and rhetoric are quickly borrowed across language barriers. One example is the concept of the 'Islamization' of Christian countries, which is widely used in contemporary Russia, for example, in a broadcast of the popular TV show *Poedinok* by Vladimir Solovev on 24 October 2013, hosting the head of the Liberal Democratic Party of Russia, Vladimir Zhirinovskii.² In the show, the men agreed that 'Islamization' is the main problem in contemporary Russia and that this process is executed by migrants, who come to Russia and 'exploit' the Russian freedom of religion to practise Islam.

The popular leader of the opposition, Alexei Navalny (2015) writes about the security threat posed by Muslim migrants on his blog: '90% of the immigrants in Russia are young Muslim men from the countryside, which is the very area in which terrorists enlist people. The sources of migration are Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, countries, to say it openly, in which the borders are very transparent and close to the hearths of aggressive Islam'. Navalny's clearly unfounded numbers³ of migrants from these countries enforce his alarmist claim about the widespread nature of Islamic radicalism and terrorism within these people. In conclusion, Navalny argues that even economic depression is a better option than an increase of Muslim migrants: 'The only thing that can save us – if one may use such a word here – are a low level of living and economic problems. These make Russia a much less attractive destination for migration, not state politics'.

² The TV show can be found on countless websites. See <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1GQKooLwsNU>, retrieved 11 November 2015.

³ For well-grounded criticism of Navalny's numbers and of his arguments in general, see Abashin (2015).

Typically, the Russian media is careful to distinguish ‘traditional Russian Islam’ and Islam as a religion both from Islamic terrorism and what is conceived as the either aggressive or illiterate Islam of many migrants (Aitamurto 2016). However, the distinction can also be intentionally evaporated, as in the discussion about the ‘Islamization’ of Russia, which lumps all Muslims in Russia together. Despite the conformist rhetoric of the biggest muftiates, even these can fall into the category of suspects. There are journalists and public figures who question the competence of the official Muslim organizations in integrating migrants. Aleksei Grishin (2015), the former Chief Advisor to the Administration of the President of the Russian Federation in the Council for Cooperation with Religious Organizations, attacked one of the biggest Muslim organizations of Russia, the Council of Muftis of Russia, for being too lenient with radical Islam in his article, ‘Why are the “lambs” trusted in the care of “wolves” in us?’. Grishin practically equates migrants with extremism, using the number of migrants in certain muftiates as proof of their radicalism, and ends this analysis with the policy suggestion to ‘limit the activity of Muslim organizations in work with migrants’ until ‘order’ is secured within these muftiates (Grishin 2015).⁴ These kinds of attacks explain why in public, the official Islamic organizations prefer to be very cautious in criticizing violations of the rights of Muslim migrants.

Poistettu:

Conclusions

In Russia, engagement in civic or political activism or trust in local authorities and democracy are seldom discussed as indicators of successful integration. In contrast, adaptation to culture figures as the core issue in discussions about the integration of migrants. The frequency of the term ‘adaptation’ in the integration debates reveals that migrants are expected to adapt to Russian society, whereas very little reflection is made on the way Russian society could better accommodate migrants and cultural diversity. In this way, minorities are not necessarily perceived as active agents, able to contribute to Russian society and culture. The same understanding of migrants as objects can be seen even in the rhetoric of some Muslim leaders, who stress the need to educate migrants, who in this way are implied to be religiously illiterate. Revealingly, commentators talk more often about the problem of ill-willing propagators of radical Islam among migrants than about

⁴ Aleksei Grishin is similar to another well-known societal figure, Roman Silant’ev, in that they both have held high administrative positions and are regularly presented in media as experts on Islam, but in the Muslim media and on the Internet are widely accused of Islamophobia. Both of them are especially critical of the CMR, which has adopted a more independent stance toward the ROC than its main rival, the Central Spiritual Board of Russia, and has brought up the discrimination against Muslims more actively.

the reasons why such ideas might find support within or be developed by Muslim migrants in dire conditions.

The Russian authorities legitimize xenophobic claims by translating them into a socially acceptable form of 'protecting the interests of the indigenous inhabitants' or 'maintaining the social peace' (Popov and Kuznetsov 2008: 235). The credibility of such rhetoric is bolstered by the academic, political and social tendency to present interethnic relationships in the framework of conflict, or *konfliktologiya*. Ethnicity is assumed to be inseparably linked to culture, which is depicted as a given. This primordial understanding of identity highlights the incompatibility of cultures and presents conflict as the consequence of their encounters. In the media, and even in scholarly studies, one may encounter claims that there is a scientifically proved percentage of migrants, above which conflicts and social problems will inevitably grow up (Shnirelman 2008; Popov & Kuznetsov 2008: 228).

Racist features can easily be found in Russian public discussions about the problems related to migration and all the more often, the discrimination is done not in openly racist terms, but in the form of cultural criticism towards Islam. Whereas the compatriots programme seeks to invite to Russia foreign citizens with Russian heritage, Muslims are often explicitly or implicitly excluded from the category of 'Russians'. Revealingly, in the debates about migrants in such Russian cities as Moscow and St. Petersburg, the category of these 'troublesome others' regularly extends to include internal migrants from Dagestan and Chechenia, and even all Muslims in Russia.

Unfounded exaggeration of the threat of radical Islam and the problems caused by the cultural and religious differences between migrants and native citizens is preventing rather than aiding solving social problems (see also Zaionchkovskaya, Mkrtchyan, and Tyuryukanova 2009: 43, 46–7). The growing Islamophobia creates an extra burden for Muslims to show their loyalty to the Russian state and society. Yet further burdens are imposed by the demands that migrants should adapt to Russian values or 'ways of life', which is occasionally presented in an idealized way as a high morality which, it seems safe to say, is not necessarily followed by many ethnic Russians either. Islamophobia and migrantophobia, the construction of the dangerous 'other', are forms of governmentality. In addition to blurring the analysis of societal problems, the 'discourses of danger' 'distance migrant communities from incorporating themselves into the political, social, economic and cultural spheres of life of majority society in a way that prompts them to invest in their ethno-cultural and religious identities' (Kaya 2012: 404).

Even though the Russian state has been more generous in granting funding for the ROC for social work with migrants, it has also recognized the potential of Muslim organizations to solve social

problems connected to migration. Several imams, mosques and Muslim organizations carry out social work with migrants by providing emotional and material support. For many migrants, mosques provide places to form networks which help them to navigate and integrate into the new environment. However, the ethnic, cultural and socio-economic differences between the official imams and the Muslim migrants also pose challenges to this work. Moreover, the leaders of Islamic organizations may hesitate to openly address discrimination against migrants and the Islamophobia of the authorities for fear that this would be labelled as extremism or unpatriotism.

The twofold aim in promoting 'traditional Islam' among migrants is to encourage civic behaviour and prevent religious radicalization. However, due to the relative scarcity of these resources, the informal networks and communities loosely connected to mosques and prayer rooms seem to be more important for migrants. The concerns that these promote cultural ghettoization are justified if the migrants have to rely only on these to get information about the surrounding society and their rights. The main danger is that such networks are used by people in an advantaged position to gain control of the less-advantaged migrants. However, suspicions about the informal Islamic networks in the integration of newcomers to the surrounding society can also be unwarranted and be based more on prejudice about Islam. An alternative view is to see these networks as a part of civil society, which can supplement official structures.

The stereotype of Muslims as a static and a sealed community is one feature of Islamophobic rhetoric (Moosavi 2014: 656). This feature can certainly be noticed in President Putin's call to 'socialize Muslims' into Russian society. However, it should be noted that here Putin's rhetoric does not necessarily differ from that of leading European politicians: a similar feature of 'othering' Muslims was noticed by Moosavi in his analysis of the statements made by ministers in Tony Blair's UK Labour government. In their speeches, these ministers, although trying in many ways to avoid the open labelling of all Muslims, presented them as a monolithic group which posed problems for British society with their 'otherness' and therefore placed onto Muslims the burden of the responsibility to 'integrate', which in that context rather seemed like a demand to assimilate (Moosavi 2014: 669).

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